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An Essay
on
The Authority
of
Names.

By G. MADDALL of Virginia.

Paper March 18th 1814

W. L. H.

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Authority of Names.

If we would find out truth in many instances we must dare to deviate from the long beaten track, and venture to think with a just and unbiased liberty. Watts.

*Quamvis enim cedere auctoritati debeamus,
rectius tamen arbitror, in tanta re, ratione quam
auctoritate superare.*

King Lib. 1. Ep. 20.

The object of the following dissertation is to show the influence of Names, and the consequences necessarily incident, to such mental servitude.

The human mind ever active and upon the alert, fixed as on a pivot, is easily turned with every "wind of doctrine", when assailed by the subtle reasoning of some ingenious Theorist; and the legitimate order of the mental system being destroyed, is left captive and in chains.

In the infantile state the authority of the pa-

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The first of the series of experiments was made on the 21st of November 1844. The object was to determine the effect of the addition of a small quantity of water to a mixture of sulphuric acid and potassium dichromate. The mixture was placed in a glass vessel and the water was added in small quantities at intervals. The result was that the mixture became more fluid and the color changed from a deep red to a lighter shade of red. This was repeated several times with varying quantities of water and the results were recorded.

The second experiment was made on the 22nd of November 1844. The object was to determine the effect of the addition of a small quantity of water to a mixture of sulphuric acid and potassium dichromate. The mixture was placed in a glass vessel and the water was added in small quantities at intervals. The result was that the mixture became more fluid and the color changed from a deep red to a lighter shade of red. This was repeated several times with varying quantities of water and the results were recorded.

The third experiment was made on the 23rd of November 1844. The object was to determine the effect of the addition of a small quantity of water to a mixture of sulphuric acid and potassium dichromate. The mixture was placed in a glass vessel and the water was added in small quantities at intervals. The result was that the mixture became more fluid and the color changed from a deep red to a lighter shade of red. This was repeated several times with varying quantities of water and the results were recorded.

The fourth experiment was made on the 24th of November 1844. The object was to determine the effect of the addition of a small quantity of water to a mixture of sulphuric acid and potassium dichromate. The mixture was placed in a glass vessel and the water was added in small quantities at intervals. The result was that the mixture became more fluid and the color changed from a deep red to a lighter shade of red. This was repeated several times with varying quantities of water and the results were recorded.

The fifth experiment was made on the 25th of November 1844. The object was to determine the effect of the addition of a small quantity of water to a mixture of sulphuric acid and potassium dichromate. The mixture was placed in a glass vessel and the water was added in small quantities at intervals. The result was that the mixture became more fluid and the color changed from a deep red to a lighter shade of red. This was repeated several times with varying quantities of water and the results were recorded.

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sent must of necessity have more or less influence on the tender mind, and may perhaps from improper precepts and worse example, carry the latter inroad into fatal errors: but when the powers of the mind are completely developed, and reason uncontrolled is permitted to be the governing principle; the mind calling to its aid, its various faculties, examining for itself into the nature, causes and fitness of things, may by this means surmount the prejudices of education, the never failing source of ignorance, and bane to all attainments in useful knowledge.

If all the causes were combined which have in any way contributed to hinder and retard the progress of intellectual improvement (with the single exception) of that of the Authority of Names, I think I should be warranted in asserting, that the fact has been by far the most deleterious in its effects. I shall now proceed to ⁶enumerate some facts that may substantiate the position I have

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opened.

We are told of a Florentine philosopher whose prejudices had taken such deep root, that he could never be persuaded to look through one of Galileo's telescopes, lest he should see something in the heavens that might disturb his belief in the Aristotelian philosophy.

The immortal Plato was doubtless instrumental in preventing the philosophers of antiquity from making advances in the science of nature, which have long since been demonstrated to be practicable. He says, should any one, attempt, by curious research to account for the admirable mechanism (alluding to the composition of colour) he will manifest by so doing, how entirely ignorant he is of divine of ~~divine~~ and human power. But it was a task allotted to the fertility of a Newton's genius, to remove the veil which covered the intellectual eyes of the Grecian sage, and to introduce us to a world of beauties, in the curious

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Handwritten notes on the right page, including the word "Handwritten" at the top and various fragments of text such as "hand-drawn", "definition", "was in", "area, and", "as and de", "loophole, and", "lie", "happy influ", "first look", "conclusion", "There is", "force of arg", "ment. The", "your kind", "likely negl", "telling for", "and have", "continue be".

Phenomena of Light.

What but the authority of Aristotle could have dragged the Florentine astronomer, before the Inquisition, for having dared to think that the sun was immovably fixed, in the centre of the universe, and that the earth turns round in annual and diurnal motions; opinions so false in philosophy, and so contrary to the word of God!

Cicero was well acquainted with the unhappy influences of Authority, and complains, in his first book de Natura Deorum; of it. In disputes & controversies (says he) it is not so much the author or patrons of an opinion, as the weight and force of argument which should influence the mind. The authority of those who teach is a frequent hinderance to those who learn, because they utterly neglect to exercise their own judgment, taking for granted whatsoever others whom they reverence have judged for them. I can by no means, continues he, approve what we learn from the Py-

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Pythagoreans that if any thing asserted in disputation was questioned, they were wont to answer, *Eph' dixit*; that is he himself said so, meaning Pythagoras. So far did prejudice prevail that Authority without reason was sufficient to determine disputes and establish truth.

Human authority, says an able writer, too con to ancient, tho' it hath had universal sovereignty and swayed all the learned and vulgar world for thousands of years, yet has no firm & undoubted claim to truth; nor is it any improvement of courtesy, to enter a caveat, with all due decorum against its pretended dominion. Among all the beliances, what is there, that has been longer established, and more unverbally received, ever since the days of Aristotle, and perhaps for ages before he lived, than this, that all heavy bodies whenever tend towards the centre of the earth? But Sir Isaac Newton has found that those large and ponderous bodies, the earth &

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all the plans, tend towards the centre of the plan,
whereby the Authority of more than three thousand -
years or more, is not only called in question; -
but actually refuted and renounced.

If we take with a comprehensive eye as at
present would have been seen in the various
sciences we should have ample reason in reason-
ing, at the above, how and where it is that
we are situated from the most ancient to the
most modern times. It would seem not
if the human state of mankind had not been
divided, from the most ancient to the most
modern, by the great plan of Abraham, the
greatest, we would in all probability have
made every system that is particularly in
knowledge and the ownership of truth; there has
been effected by the various sciences in
the sciences and literature, which by the
several sciences, in a human education,
and a work.



Man kind appears in every age of the world
to have been in chains and subjects of some man
at least. Did man see great loss of civilization,
if I may be allowed the term, which overwhelmed with its
weight, his whole body of man carrying all the
man's burden with it, and the whole of it, in
the iron yoke which it might support? But what
object of his human mind in such himself
he aspired to Heaven and that he had the help
of the angels of Heaven, from the angel Gabriel,
etc. And all this to undertake the purpose of an
ambitious man in a mind to heaven and glo
ry.

But let us now our attention to a sub-
ject which is more intimately connected with the
accidents of the eternal life, I mean to the conse-
quences which have resulted, and may still re-
sult from the influence of man in Medicine.

As some have the important doctrine of
the circulation of the blood been vulgarized, there

[illegible]

... which is rather to more ...
... denouncing it as a mere innovation. Thus
... that it was ...
... which can be established. The effects of
... influence
... the human mind. ...
... of two centuries having elapsed. Before
... phenomenon is the animal economy
... to be generally known and admitted.
What a happy discovery! which enables us, rati-
... account for the nature of the fluid in
our system, and which has borne away in its-
side all the vague and ridiculous notions that
had previously existed with regard to it.

... is the constant Martin and was
son of nature, the disciples of Stahl, says Galba,
... the art of curing diseases by expecto-
... and by so doing have imposed only in-
... and various remedies, zealously opposing &
proscribing the use of some of the most energetic

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such as opium and Prussian Bark. The same author
remarks, "The so much vaunted Hippocratic method
of curing, has often had a very pernicious influence
in the practice of physic, by leading Physicians
into, or continuing them in a weak and feeble
practice. The opposite is Rational medicine, and the
most continuance of Galenism, by the Medical Faculty
in Paris may be reduced to a striking instance
of error and blindness, by which the progress was
inhibited the use of one the most efficient of our
remedial agents.

amidst the ignorance which prevailed in
some periods of medical science, it is to be wondered
at, says Boer, that a thousand childish imaginations
arose, nor that the qualities of the mind were deduced
from the physical properties of the heart. The vulgar, for
example, speak of the bone of the heart. And from where
did this arise? From Aristotle! who explains to us that
there is at the root of the heart, a bone which serves
for its basis; and accordingly, numerous Physicians also

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have written upon the heart, since his time, have
spoken more or less mysteriously about the liver

The vulgar talk in plain terms of a little
and big heart, as synonymous with a narrow or
open heart, but this mistake may be traced to
high authority. Bartholine was so much convin-
ced that a small heart beget courage, and a big
one irresolution and fear, that he is thoroughly sur-
prised when he finds the contrary, for valens had
homo, animi audax, mentis, ut exultans in caute
frequentis et vima in opatio testabatur. Pliny is
torn as of a celebrated Median general, Ars-
tomeas, whose greatness never was known till
after his death; for the Lacedaemonians being told
of him three times, resolved at last to open his
heart: and there as a proof of his most invincible
courage and animus they found his heart filled
with hair. Thus did these great names sanctification
abound notions of the vulgar.

The science of medicine has been considered

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one, in which experience is to be the only directory,
and reasoning and theory are to be rejected entire-
ly, in the practice of our profession. And yet the very
author, who prohibits *theoria*, reasons in every page
of his writings, and as Dr. Rush has very justly ob-
served, establishes a very important truth, and
that is, that to reason and theorise in medicine,
is not only natural, but an indispensable exer-
cise of the faculties of the human mind. What
will I say of the experience of the older physi-
cians in their treatment of febrile diseases, guided
solely by this touchstone for correct and scien-
tific practice? What was more absurd than con-
fining our patients while in the hospital, to an
environment ^{from} in which no air was allowed
to enter, and persons visited independently. We shall
soon learn that the worst attempt is to regulate
a man of intellect, by keeping it exposed to the
influence of a hot furnace.

We find that Sydenham is surely Geo.

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and in answer, to what the use of cathartics in
regular articulars, it may be observed, "an irrita-
tion in nature, but no matter of the disease
should we think one of the cathartics, emol-
lents and cathartics will have no other effect than
that of bringing back the offending matter to
the bowels." Inculcated by his high authority, says
Professor Chapman, we have ever since, with some
limited exceptions nearly abandoned the use of
laxatives, and been content, to let the attack
spontaneously exhaust itself, to conclude the
saint with flannel, and to urge the patient
an endurance of the pain, condole, proverbial
of the amount of what is at present done in
is a portrayal of foat.

The ancient physicians considered it ter-
ribly dangerous to open an artery which was bel-
ieving with the spirits of life, so that when an ar-
tery in the temple was first perforated, they pro-
nounced it murderous and on this reasoning it

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was absolutely irrefragable on many ages. And did we submit to the authority of Bell and other surgeons of the last century, "a week or fortnight having elapsed, all efforts should be considered as useless in reducing a dislocated bone."

The celebrated W. J. Bell tells us that he has learnt from accumulated experience, that a roasted toad is a specific for the gout: and he assures us that a person may secure himself, for a whole year, from angina, by eating a roasted swisscow! Happily for mankind these magical virtues of the croaking frog, and chattering lizard, have descended to the tomb in which are enshrined the charms and amulets, which once held a place among the remedial resources of our art, and more enlightened views are entertained in the management of the maladies incident to our species. —

Shall reason lend her aid in unravelling the hidden mysteries attending the sciences of Law and Theology? and shall not we throw

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open every portal and avenue for her entrance, to enable us to pry into the equally recondite phenomena of animated nature? Shall the philosopher be guided, in his investigations, while scanning the motions of the heavenly bodies, and in ascertaining the laws of those motions, by reason:—and is there not an equal necessity for our submitting to her dictates, when searching for the causes of disease, its treatment, and the effects which result from morbid actions in the system? Shall the voice of reason be heard when the man of God warns us of our immortal concerns and prescribes our spiritual regimen; and shall we who are the medici of the physical heart, refuse to listen to this heavenly messenger, and go with unheeding ears, and our eyes averted to the light, which shines on the path that leads to the fountain of truth. And finally, shall reason find admittance at the bar of a judiciary, where the wrongs of injured innocence are heard?

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and shall she not find a place at the bar of our consciences, when we deliberate upon the destiny of those committed to our professional care.

A very great error has been made in considering the human fabric as a mere machine, or automaton; leaving the vitality entirely out of the question. And accordingly we find in the recipes of some of the old authors, medicines, which stand the sharp angles of irritating particles floating in the blood, or those which concoct the morbid matter which is to be expelled from the body. Making this most delicately contrived system, this "Lark of a Thousand Strings", this animated being a mere reel or oneie in which the chemist "strives nature to reveal her secrets", forgetting that this being possesses life, and qualities and properties, and is governed by laws totally different from those which obtain in inanimate matter. We know too true very little in regard to brute matter, and also of the properties and powers of the inanimate

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creation. We have all this impenetrable veil of darkness, between us and the arcana of animated nature: and still more say Herder, when the unknown peculiarities of life are taken into the account. For to bodies which possess this principle, belong many powers, the operations of which can never be explained by those laws, by which lifeless matter is governed.

May the period soon arrive when the world shall be blessed with some lofty genius who shall be capable of contemplating the animated world with the same sagacious eye, with which the inanimate has been viewed.

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Physiology of disease

James H. Hensley

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